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14 July 2015

Mr Andrew Card
Headteacher
The Heys Primary School
Whiteacre Road
Ashton-Under-Lyne
Greater Manchester
OL6 9NS

Dear Mr Card

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Heys Primary School, Tameside

Following my visit to your school on 13 July 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in April 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that all staff are challenging the most able pupils in all year groups
- ensure that a higher proportion of pupils make more than expected progress, particularly during Key Stage 2
- ensure that as many pupils as possible reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, the Chair and two other members of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and two groups of pupils. I evaluated the school action plan and scrutinised student

achievement data. I also had the opportunity to accompany you on a tour of the school and look at a sample of pupils' work.

Context

Since the previous inspection, three new teaching assistants have been appointed.

Main findings

You have produced a strong action plan in response to the recent inspection. It focuses very clearly on the areas of improvement that were highlighted in the report and is driven by ambitious success criteria. Actions in the plan are linked to teachers' performance management targets. It is clear in the plan who is responsible for leading, monitoring and evaluating the various actions, and as such, provides a very effective road map for your journey of continued improvement.

As I visited classrooms and spoke to pupils throughout the day, I was struck by their very positive attitudes to learning. Every child I met throughout the day was polite and friendly. A calm atmosphere pervades the school and children of all ages are clearly enjoying their learning. This was particularly evident in my formal discussions with pupils from both Key Stages 1 and 2. They could articulate in their own way how the procedures used for tracking their progress help them to take more responsibility for their own learning.

The national test results for pupils at the end of Year 2 and 6 represent improvements in all areas on last year's figures. Key Stage 1 looks particularly strong with attainment measures likely to compare very favourably with national figures. Overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 has improved significantly on last year. However, there is still work to be done to bring progress and attainment figures in writing and mathematics at this key stage in line with national averages. Only a very small proportion of pupils at the end of Year 6 is making more than expected progress and you are aware that this needs to be a key focus area for all teachers.

The procedures you use for tracking pupils' progress are rigorous and robust. The pupils are very positive about the mentoring system that sits alongside this, and the achievement data indicate that this is having an impact on their progress. However, ensuring there is sufficient challenge for the most able remains a cause for concern. This year, only a very small number of Year 6 students attained Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics. In my discussions with pupils, several gave examples of occasions when they have found their work too easy, and how frustrating they find this. These pupils relish hard work and challenge and are not getting enough in their day to day classroom experiences. We discussed how important it is that all teachers focus their actions on ensuring the most able pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, achieve their full potential.

My scrutiny of a sample of books revealed that teachers' marking is helping pupils to improve their work. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on and improve their work, and produce pieces of extended writing. However, the high standard of work seen in pupils' English books is not always evident in the subjects covered in their 'enquiry' books.

Governors know the school well and are very 'hands on'. They triangulate what you tell them by doing their own work scrutinies and talking to pupils. The relationship between them and leaders in school is honest and transparent. They challenge but in an encouraging way, and consequently their comments are received well and acted upon. Members of the governing body are reflective and responsive and are focused on their core purpose of improving outcomes for pupils in their school.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

You and the governors acknowledge that you benefit from a very effective relationship with the local authority. The officer linked to the school has worked closely with you throughout this year, and you have valued his advice and support. The work he has done on a coaching programme with middle leaders has had a positive impact in developing their capacity. The local authority brokered a link with an outstanding literacy leader from a nearby teaching school and you are making the most of his involvement with the school, particularly in the area of improving pupils' writing skills.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Tameside and as below.

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy